



NEWS RELEASE

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Two Northern California Men in ‘Sextortion’ Plot Targeting Professional Poker Players Receive Federal Prison Sentences

LOS ANGELES – Two Silicon Valley men were sentenced today to federal prison terms of 3½ years and two years for their roles in a scheme that used naked photographs and other private information stolen from email accounts in an attempt to extort hundreds of thousands of dollars from professional players on the World Poker Tour.

Tyler Schrier, 23, of Menlo Park, was sentenced to 42 months in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy, extortion and unauthorized access to a protected computer to obtain information.

In addition to the “sextortion” plot, Schrier admitted that he had previously extorted and received more than \$26,000 from professional poker players in another plot. He further admitted that while free on bond after being charged in the “sextortion” case, he illegally accessed two email accounts that allowed him to steal approximately \$4,000 from online poker accounts.

The second man sentenced today – Keith James Hudson, 39, of San Jose – received a two-year prison term after pleading guilty to unauthorized access to a protected computer to obtain information for purposes of private financial gain. Hudson admitted that he hacked into a poker player’s email account, stole naked photographs from the illegally accessed account, and plotted with Schrier to extort poker players with those naked images.

Schrier and Hudson were sentenced by United States District Judge S. James

Otero.

According to court documents, the sextortion scheme took place in the fall of 2010, after members of the conspiracy illegally accessed an email account belonging to Joe Sebok. Armed with intimate e-mails and photographs of the victim, Schrier threatened to post those intimate photographs and e-mails on the Internet unless Sebok and other victims paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in extortion payments. Sebok and the other victims in this sextortion case did not make any payments.

As part of the scheme, in November 2010, Schrier sent an e-mail with a nude photograph of Sebok to approximately 100 individuals.

During today's sentencing hearing, Sebok addressed the court and said the victims of the plot had "their lives altered and shattered in irreparable ways."

After the defendants hacked into his email account and released some information to the public, the fallout "instantly damaged my ability to sustain my livelihood doing what I had been since 2005," Sebok told Judge Otero. "In short, I was no longer able to maintain my then-current level of participation in the poker industry, representing the brands that I had been previously, as well as greatly destroying my ability to do so with new companies moving forward. Without belaboring the point too much, it was a nightmare, and one that I was forced to live through with millions of people watching."

A third defendant in the case, Ryder Finney, 22, of Philadelphia, pleaded guilty to conspiracy and will be sentenced later this year in federal court in Philadelphia. At sentencing, Finney faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison.

The sextortion case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Schrier pleaded guilty pursuant to a plea agreement that involved federal prosecutors in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Connecticut, Boston, Tampa and Minnesota.

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